

# The Necessity of Teaching Verbal and Non-Verbal Taboos to Non-Iranian Persian Learners from the Perspective of Teachers Teaching Persian to Non-Persians

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## Abstract

Teaching and learning verbal and non-verbal taboos in language classes have always been one of the issues attracting the researchers' attention. Also, the current study is one of the studies which has dealt with the necessity of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to non-Iranian Persian learners from the perspective of teachers teaching Persian to non-Persians. The participants of the current study were 23 of the instructors of Persian Language Center of Iran's Imam Khomeini International University. The participants were both male and female and all of them were 34-up years. The method of the current study was a descriptive one in which a researcher-made questionnaire was used. The questionnaire had 22 questions, all of which were based on the attitudes of 12 experienced instructors of Persian Language Center of Iran's Imam Khomeini International University regarding teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to non-Iranian Persian learners. The results of data analysis indicated that non-Iranian learners' awareness of verbal and non-verbal taboos is essential, and teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to non-Iranian learners is not essential. Based on the instructors' perspectives, the age and gender of the learners cannot be a hindrance in answering their questions about laborious terms and non-verbal taboos. Moreover, the instructors' strategies on how to teach the students the necessary verbal and nonverbal taboos and the role of teacher's position when teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos were investigated and analyzed. The results showed that, in general, female young teachers and those having less experience in teaching directly try to avoid teaching taboos in their classes.

**Keywords:** Teaching Persian to non-Persians, verbal and non-verbal taboos, Persian teachers

## Introduction

Verbal and non-verbal taboos are among the topics that all communities have given special attention to them in order to protect the privacy of individuals and social security. The majority of these issues are formed based on the system of values and norms of the societies. Therefore, it can be said that a significant number of them find meaning in particular cultures and overshadow different areas. For example, the relationship between taboos and language and the way of their teaching have prompted language teaching experts to lead their studies and researches towards responding the dos and don'ts of teaching these risky categories in their language classes. Furthermore, given the fact that in the process of language learning the source language and the target language are taken into account, at least two cultures should be considered. Of course, this is when we have an optimistic viewpoint because in most language classes, there are students with multiple languages and from many different cultures and this multiplies the problems of teaching taboos.

Although most of the research that has been done in this area has dealt with the concept of teaching taboos either theoretically or from the perspective of students, the current study attempted to investigate the necessity of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to non-Iranian Persian learners from the perspective of teachers teaching Persian to non-Persians. The current study aimed at answering the followings research questions:

Q1: Is it essential for learners to be aware of verbal and non-verbal taboos?

Q2: Is it essential to teach verbal and non-verbal taboos to learners?

Q3: Does age have any effect on teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to them?

Q4: Does gender of the learners have any effect on teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to them?

Moreover, the current research also examined the strategies used by the teachers in teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to learners when necessary and the position of teachers when teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos.

### ***Taboo***

In the given definitions of taboos these concepts have been examined from two perspectives, namely prohibition and holiness, a number of which will be discussed below.

According to Trudgill (2000, p.18), a taboo refers to a forbidden speech or behavior. He believes that non-verbal taboos are behaviors which are supernaturally forbidden, unethical or inappropriate. He also considers taboos as words which should not be said.

According to Wardhaugh (2000, p.236), taboos include behaviors and speeches that the society does not approve because it believes that these behaviors and speeches are harmful to people due to some supernatural reasons or because of violence and as far as the language is concerned, people do not utter them and if needed they try to subtilize them using a variety of ways. He believes that the use of words and euphemistic phrases provides the opportunity to talk about unpleasant issues. He divides taboos to two very broad categories (e.g. sexual issues, religious and political issues and death) and taboos that are related to a particular culture and society (concepts such as the stepmother and using left hand which is considered unlucky in some cultures).

Modarresi (1989, p.79), views taboo as a forbidden social behavior and believes that linguistic taboos are in fact one of the aspects of social behavior which can be interpreted as a ban in linguistic behavior. He also suggests that avoiding the use of language forms is a phenomenon that can be seen in various societies which is linked with the values, social beliefs and culture of the people.

Le (2006) believes that taboos are based on cultural values and beliefs of the linguistic community with respect to a particular topic. Therefore, it can be said that the degree of abnormality of laborious terms is determined by the culture and social beliefs so that what is taboo in a society, may be considered as normal in another society.

According to Akmajian et al. (1996, p.368), merely taboos are not ugly and unpleasant, but the sacred can also be regarded as taboos. For example, the sacred language also has privacy which means that outside the context of religious ceremony, it should be avoided. In many linguistic communities also, religious rituals can only be performed by certain people (clergymen).

Based on Dellar's opinion (as cited in Tekin, 2011), taboos vary from culture to culture. As an example, asking about someone's age, especially when he/she is older than you, or asking about people's income or the like are considered as taboos in some countries, while in others it may not. He also believes that by the change of the communities, taboos also change over time because they are rooted in the culture of a society and that's why, today, issues such as divorce, depression, and diseases such as AIDS and cancer are not considered as taboos as they were in the past.

Qanbar (2011) divides laborious terms into five groups: 1- words and terms that refer to specific organs of the human body, 2- Words and terms, including the word "apostasy", which are used in the field of religion, or words that are used in connection with religious symbols and characters, 3- Words or expressions that are used when talking about national characters and political systems, 4- Using first names of female family members in public places and in public or in the presence of strangers, 5- Words and questions that are totally private such as asking people about their contributions to the needy and poor. However, he believes that all these laborious terms are not in the same level of abnormality; for example, for him the first group is inexpressible.

### ***Gender differences in using taboos***

Gender is one of the issues that has always been studied when taboos are investigated. In the current study also, gender is one of the variables which is of great importance in language classes. This section deals with some of the opinions in this regard.

Lakeoff (2004, p.81) summarizes the characteristics of women's speech as follows: 1- Using polite forms such as indirect requests, using euphemistic expressions and avoidance of using laborious terms, 2- Little use of verbal jokes than men when talking.

Jay (1999, p. 181) believes that traditionally women do not use taboos because women are expected to control their minds while men have much freedom in harsh and hostile speech habits.

Holmes (2001, p.286) mentions two features for women speeches: 1- using polite forms such as indirect requests, 2- avoiding the use of obscene words such as swear words.

According to Coates (2004, p.84 as cited in Deckert, 2004; Timoti, 1999; Gum, 1981), using taboos is not limited to males and he believes that the use of such words is common in both sexes. In his study, Coates (2004, p.98) shows that men use less taboo language in situations where the opposite sex is present and vice versa. In such situations, especially in friendly environments, the use of taboo language among women increases significantly.

### **Literature review**

Despite the bulk of research conducted in the field of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos, none of the studies has viewed this issue from the perspective of teachers. Therefore, this section will deal with the studies which have been done in this area in general. The researches done in the area of taboos can be divided into two main categories: 1- The researches the findings of which claim that the use of taboo topics and laborious terms is very effective in the classroom and increases educational outcome, 2- The researches that remind the negative consequences of challenging issues and taboos in language classes. The following section will present some examples of the first category.

### ***Advocates of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos***

In a study, Small (2003) proposed challenging issues such as war, poverty, AIDS, ... to 80 students to discuss, all of whom were learning English as their second/foreign language. He observed that learners showed interest and eagerness to participate in these discussions and their reactions were positive to the issues under discussion. He also saw that the learners showed their satisfaction of the fact that besides learning English they have learned some interesting points as well.

In Hartman and Faulkner's study (2002), students were asked to choose their favorite taboo topics and discuss them. During the whole class session, the teacher mostly had a facilitator role, but sometimes, especially when the discussion was too hot, to avoid creating tension between the students the teacher played a moderator role. The results of his study revealed that these discussable topics can encourage students to participate in class discussions.

Nelson (1999) observed three English classes for two weeks to examine and analyze learners' reactions when they were discussing taboo topics. Furthermore, he also used a questionnaire, interview and an essay in this regard. His data analysis proved that most learners had a positive view towards taboo subjects and he concluded that the maximum participation of learners in such discussions is the motivational aspect of taboo topics.

In his study, Tekin (2011) addressed the perspective of those English learners whose native language were Turkish about class discussions on taboo topics. To this end, he gave some questionnaires to students before and after class discussions and asked them to write their opinions on topics which were considered as taboo. His findings indicated that students had positive attitudes to those discussions and in the meanwhile had learnt a lot. According to the students, taboo topics had no adverse effect on them and did not confuse their minds in any way.

As it was already mentioned, the second category of researches included the ones which deal with the negative consequences of challenging and taboo topics in language classes. The followings are some examples of these kinds of researches.

#### ***Opponents of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos***

In Khuwaileh's study (2002), the students were asked to choose a topic from the list which contained taboo topics and then write about it. The most important result of this study was that the majority of participants, especially girls, preferred not to write about subjects such as AIDS and similar diseases. Interview with these students showed that the main reason for their avoidance in choosing these topics is the compulsion of using rude words which put them in critical situations. Some of the students were also worried about being ashamed of looking at their teacher's face directly after writing about these topics.

A similar study was also conducted by Deckert (1996) in which he asked 105 students to select a taboo topic and write about it. The majority of students preferred to write about everyday topics rather than moral and humanity issues. The results of this study showed significant differences between boys and girls in choosing the topic, that is girls avoided choosing taboo topics more than boys.

### **Methodology**

#### ***Participants***

The participants of the current study were 23 teachers of Persian Language Center of Iran's Imam Khomeini International University, both males and females (7 men and 16 women) with average age of 34 years. These teachers were chosen randomly out of 35 teachers of the same language center. Their teaching experience, that is teaching Persian to non-Persians, varied from one semester to 23 semesters. As the methodology of the current study, some researcher-made questionnaires were given to the participants, the results of data analysis are presented in the data analysis section.

#### ***Instruments***

The main instrument of the current study was a researcher-made questionnaire including 22 questions in different sections, using a five-item likert spectrum (from strongly agree to strongly disagree). This questionnaire was used to evaluate the necessity of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos and their relationship with learners' age, gender and the teachers' experiences. In order to prepare the questionnaire, 12 experienced teachers of Persian Language Center of Iran's Imam Khomeini International University were interviewed through Delphi method and were asked to write down their views on teaching verbal and nonverbal taboos to non-Iranian Persian students. They were also asked to talk about the considerations that they thought to be necessary for teachers regarding teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos. Then, based on the their comments, views and

concerns regarding teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos a questionnaire was prepared with 22 questions and 5 Likert-scale options. These five options were "strongly agree", "agree", "no idea", "disagree" and "strongly disagree", respectively.

The first 7 questions of the questionnaire were completely related to the four main research questions. To put it another way, the first question evaluated the necessity of learners' awareness of verbal and non-verbal taboos. The second question dealt with the necessity of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos. Question number 3 investigated the impact of learner's age on teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos. Questions 4 to 7 evaluated the effect of learner's gender on teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos. Questions 8 to 12 dealt with teacher's strategies in teaching non-verbal taboos to learners when necessary. Questions 13 to 19 evaluated teacher's strategies in teaching verbal taboos to learners when necessary. The last three questions (from 20 to 22) investigated the teacher's position (maintaining his/her position) when teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos.

#### ***Reliability of the instrument***

Since Cronbach's alpha coefficient is usually considered as a suitable indicator for measuring the reliability of measuring instruments and the inner harmony among their elements, the questionnaire of the current study was also evaluated in terms of reliability using Cronbach alpha. To this end, a preliminary sample including 15 questionnaires were chosen as pre-test samples and then obtained data from these questionnaires were statistically analyzed using SPSS software and the reliability was calculated using Cronbach alpha. Table 1 presents Cronbach alpha values for the dimensions of the questionnaire. As it is clear from the table, the reliability of the questionnaire is appropriate and acceptable. The obtained reliability for the questionnaire was 0.871 which is suitable.

**Table 1: Cronbach alpha for each dimension of the questionnaire**

Dimensions of the questionnaire	Cronbach alpha
Main questions (1-7)	0.883
Strategies (8-22)	0.805
Complete questionnaire	0.871

#### **Data Analysis**

##### ***Inferential statistics***

This section deals with investigating research questions using appropriate statistical methods.

##### ***Analysis of the responses of participants to research questions***

Table 2 shows how participants answered research questions, namely the necessity of learner's awareness of verbal and non-verbal taboos, the necessity of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to learners from the perspective of teachers, and the impact of age and gender on teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos. The statistical method which was used to check the frequency of observations and the orientations in responding the questions was Chi-Square.

Regarding learner's awareness of taboos, the Chi-Square was significant. This means that the participants aimed at a specific orientation in responding this question. Considering the abundance of Likert-scale options from participants' view, learner's awareness of verbal and non-verbal taboos in the target language was remarkably significant (More than 82% of the participants agreed or completely agreed this issue).

Regarding the necessity of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to learners, Chi-Square was not significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). That is, the participants did not aim at a specific orientation when answering this research question and in their opinion teaching laborious terms and non-verbal taboos of the target language to learners are not essential.

**Table 2: Checking how participants answered research questions**

Dimension	Question	Index	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree	Chi-Square
Necessity of awareness	1	Learners' awareness of laborious terms and non-verbal taboos of the target language is essential.	(0.0%)0	(4.3%) 1	(13.0%)3	(60.9%)14	(21.7%)15	sig= 0.001
Necessity of teaching	2	Teaching laborious terms and non-verbal taboos of the target language to learners is essential.	(0.0%)0	(8.7%) 2	(26.1%)6	(47.8%)11	(17.4%)4	sig= 0.051
Impact of age	3	The ages of the learners are not important for me. I will answer their questions about laborious terms.	(13.0%)3	(21.7%) 5	(0.0%)0	(60.9%)14	(4.3%)1	sig= 0.001
Impact of gender	4	If the learners were in the same sex with me, I will answer their questions about laborious terms.	(0.0%)0	(17.4%) 4	(13.0%)3	(47.8%)11	(21.7%)5	sig= 0.081
	5	If all the learners were male or female (all from the same sex), I will answer their questions about laborious terms.	(0.0%)0	(30.4%) 7	(13.0%)3	(47.8%)11	(8.7%)2	sig= 0.032
	6	The learners' gender is not important for me. I won't answer their questions about laborious terms.	(43.5%)10	(47.8%)11	(8.7%)2	(0.0%)0	(0.0%)0	sig= 0.042
	7	If the learners were from both sexes, I will answer their questions about laborious terms.	(0.0%)0	(8.7%)2	(4.3%)1	(73.9%)17	(13.0%)3	sig= 0.001



Considering the impact of age on teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos, Chi-Square was significant and the participants had a specific orientation when answering this question. Based on the participants' responses, learner's age was not considered as an obstacle in answering their questions about laborious terms and non-verbal taboos and the teachers significantly agreed with answering their questions in this regard, without taking the learner's age into account.

The impact of gender on answering the questions about laborious terms and explaining non-verbal taboos was another dimension of the questionnaire which included questions 4 to 7. The Chi-Square analysis for questions 5, 6 and 7 was significant while it was not significant for question number 4. It can be concluded that the teachers significantly believed that answering learners' questions about verbal and non-verbal taboos should not be affected by their gender and under any circumstances (mixed classes), answering their questions about verbal and non-verbal taboos is necessary.

***Analysis of the responses of participants to questions about teacher's strategies***

As it was already mentioned, the questions of this section includes three dimensions; the teachers' strategies in teaching non-verbal taboos, teaching verbal taboos and teachers' positions in teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos. Table 3 summarizes how the participants answered the questions of these three dimensions. Chi-Square was used as the statistical method to check the frequency of observations and the orientations in responding the questions.

**Table 3: Checking how participants answered practical questions of the research**

Component	Question	Index	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree	Chi-Square
Teachers' strategies in teaching non-verbal taboos	8	I will provide explanations to prevent the repetition of learners' behaviors including non-verbal taboos.	(8.7%)2	(30.4%)7	(4.3%)1	(47.8%)11	(8.7%)2	Sig= 0.003
	9	I will provide explanations for learners' behaviors including non-verbal taboos out of class and in their own presence.	(8.7%)3	(30.4%)6	(4.3%)5	(47.8%)7	(8.7%)2	Sig= 0.442
	10	I will ask someone else to provide explanations for learners' behaviors including non-verbal taboos	(8.7%)2	(52.2%)12	(21.7%)5	(13.0%)3	(4.3%)1	Sig= 0.002
	11	If I see behaviors including non-verbal taboos from the learners, I will ask them to refer to books, dictionaries, magazines and websites to amend/correct them.	(13.0%)3	(30.4%)7	(13.0%)3	(34.8%)8	(8.7%)2	Sig= 0.175
	12	In order to amend/correct learners' behaviors including non-verbal taboos I will use an intermediate language (such as English or Arabic).	(13.0%)3	(21.7%)5	(17.4%)4	(43.5%)10	(4.3%)1	Sig= 0.043

Component	Question	Index	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree	Chi-Square
Teachers' strategies in teaching verbal taboos	13	To make learners aware of the laborious terms, when they ask questions about these terms and when they produce verbal taboos unconsciously, I will give them direct explanation.	(0.0%)0	(30.4%)7	(8.7%)2	(52.2%)12	(8.7%)2	Sig= 0.008
	14	I will give explanations about learners' questions about laborious terms and verbal taboos out of class and in their own presence.	(4.3%)1	(39.1%)9	(13.0%)3	(43.5%)10	(0.0%)0	Sig= 0.017
	15	I will ask someone else to provide explanations for learners' questions about laborious terms and those taboos that they produce unconsciously.	(8.7%)2	(60.9%)14	(17.4%)4	(13.0%)3	(0.0%)0	Sig= 0.001
	16	If students ask questions about laborious terms or produce verbal taboos unconsciously, I will ask them to refer to books, dictionaries, magazines and websites to amend/correct them	(8.7%)2	(30.4%)7	(4.3%)1	(52.2%)12	(4.3%)1	Sig= 0.001
	17	If learners ask questions about laborious terms I tell them that I am not aware of them.	(39.1%)9	(56.5%)13	(4.3%)1	(0.0%)0	(0.0%)0	Sig= 0.008
	18	When teaching, if I face a term whose complete meaning and function requires entering the field of laborious terms (such as the word sampling), I will explain all its meanings and functions, not just its non-verbal taboo function.	(8.7%)2	(30.4%)7	(8.7%)2	(52.2%)12	(0.0%)0	Sig= 0.008
Questions about teachers' positions	19	In answering learners' questions about laborious terms, I will use an intermediate language (English or Arabic).	(8.7%)2	(39.1%)9	(17.4%)4	(34.8%)8	(0.0%)0	Sig= 0.127
	20	When explaining laborious terms and non-verbal taboos to the students, I will pay attention to my position or social status as a teacher.	(0.0%)0	(8.7%)2	(13.0%)3	(56.5%)13	(21.7%)5	Sig= 0.005



Component	Question	Index	Strongly disagree	Disagree	No idea	Agree	Strongly agree	Chi-Square
	21	I am worried about being accused of immorality and indecency by students when talking about a taboo subject in class	(21.7%)5	(43.5%)10	(26.1%)6	(4.3%)1	(4.3%)1	Sig= 0.014
	22	When talking about taboo subjects in multicultural classes, I am worried that tension and conflict occurs.	(0.0%)0	(52.2%)12	(21.7%)5	(26.1%)6	(0.0%)0	Sig= 0.154

Regarding teachers' strategies in teaching non-verbal taboos to learners when necessary, the chi-square was significant for questions 1, 3 and 5. Considering these questions and the frequency of Likert-scale options, teachers significantly mentioned that to prevent the repetition of learners' behavior including non-verbal taboos, offering direct explanations seems necessary. They also believed that any explanation about the learner's behavior which includes non-verbal taboos should be provided by the teacher, not any other person. Moreover, teachers' use of the intermediate language (such as English or Arabic) to amend/correct learner's behavior including non-verbal taboos was significantly high.

Taking into account the teachers' strategies in teaching verbal taboos to learners, it is worth mentioning that the amount of Chi-Square was significant for questions 1 to 6. Considering these questions and the frequency of the responses given to them, providing direct explanation about laborious terms and what the learners do not know about verbal taboos is essential. It is also suggested to answer learners' questions about laborious terms and verbal taboos personally and in their own presence. Teachers still believe that providing explanation for students' questions about difficult terms and verbal taboos should be done by the teachers themselves. Asking the students to refer to books, dictionaries, magazines, websites, ... when they ask questions about laborious terms or the things they do not know about verbal taboos is imperative based on the teachers' opinions. Instructors significantly relied on the fact that they should not show their unawareness when the students ask them about laborious terms and also believed that providing all the meanings and functions of the words whose explanations require entering the field of laborious terms should also be taken into account.

Regarding the position of the teacher (maintaining his/her position) when teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos, the Chi-Square for the first and second question of this section was significant. Taking these questions into account as well as the frequency of their responses, it can be said that teachers paid specific attention to their positions and social status as an instructor when explaining laborious terms and non-verbal taboos to learners. Teachers were also significantly concerned about being accused of immorality and indecency by students when talking about a taboo subject in class.

#### ***The role of gender, age and teaching experience in answering the main questions and practical questions of the research***

Table 4 represents the relationship between gender, age and teaching experiences of the teachers with how they have answered the main research questions. The statistical method which was used to find out the relationship between gender and the way participants answered the main research questions was Chi-Square. The relationship between age and teaching experience of the teachers with how they answered these questions was found out using Spearman Correlation Coefficient.

**Table 4: The relation between gender, age and teaching experience with how the participants answered the questions**

Component	Index/ Question	Gender*	Age**	Experience***
Necessity of awareness	1	0.542	0.334	0.179
Necessity of teaching	2	0.509	0.148	0.253
Impact of age	3	0.384	0.675	0.623
Impact of gender	4	0.405	0.522	0.576
	5	0.933	0.709	0.202
	6	0.278	0.848	0.368
	7	0.121	0.395	0.111

\* Significance level of Chi-Square, \*\*Significance level of Spearman correlation coefficient

As it is clear from the table, considering the relation between age, gender and teaching experience with the way participants answered the main research questions (i.e. learners' awareness of the taboos, the necessity of teaching taboos, the effect of age and gender on laborious terms and non-verbal taboos), none of the tests were meaningful. Therefore, it can be concluded that age, gender and teaching experience did not have any impact on how the participants answered the questions.

The relationship between gender, age and teaching experience with how the participants answered the questions about the strategies of the teacher when teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos as well as teacher's position are presented in table 5. For finding the relation of gender, Chi-Square and for age and teaching experience Spearman correlation was used.

As it is evident from table 5, with regard to teachers' strategies in teaching non-verbal taboos, the calculated chi-square for gender was only meaningful for question number 9, which was "I will explain learner's behavior including non-verbal taboos out of class and in his/her own presence". It is worth noting that comparing male teachers, the tendency of female teachers to explain non-verbal taboos to learners personally was more significant.

About the relationship between age and teachers' strategies in teaching non-verbal taboos, the Spearman correlation was meaningful for question number 10 which was "I will ask others to provide explanation for learners' behaviors including non-verbal taboos". This correlation coefficient was negative which means that as the ages of the teachers increased, their tendency for asking others to provide explanation for learners' behaviors including non-verbal taboos decreased. Based on the analyses, mostly young teachers tended to ask others to provide such explanations.

The Spearman correlation coefficient which was used to show the relation between teaching experience and teachers' strategies in teaching non-verbal taboos was meaningful for question 11, that was, "If I see learners' behaviors including non-verbal taboos, I will ask them to refer to books, dictionaries, websites, magazines, ...". As for the age variable, the correlation coefficient for teaching experience was also negative. That is to say, the more the teachers experiences, the less they ask students to refer to books, dictionaries, websites, magazines,... to amend/correct their behavior. But younger teachers ask their students to refer to these sources more due to their less experience.

With regard to teachers' strategies in teaching verbal taboos, the chi-square about age was meaningful for questions 17 and 18. Comparing both male and female teachers' answers to these questions it was observed that female teachers tended more to show that they are not aware of the laborious terms being questioned than their male partners. At the same time, the tendency of female teachers for providing all the meanings and functions of the words whose explanations require entering the field of laborious terms was less than male teachers.

Considering the relation between age and teachers' strategies in teaching verbal taboos, the Spearman correlation coefficient was meaningful for question number 7 which was "To answer learners' questions about laborious terms, I use the intermediate language (English or Arabic)". For this case, the correlation coefficient was positive, that is, the older the teacher became, the more his/her tendency to answer learners' questions about laborious terms using intermediate language (English or Arabic) would be.

About the relationship between gender, age and teachers' experiences with their positions (maintaining position) when teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos, it was observed that none of the statistical methods was meaningful.

**Table 5: The relation between gender, age and participants' teaching experiences with how they answered the practical questions of the research**

Component	Index/ Question	Gender*	Age**	Experience***
Teachers' strategies in teaching non-verbal taboos	8	0.874	0.741	0.902
	9	0.036	0.410	0.950
	10	0.446	0.031	0.773
	11	0.575	0.174	0.038
	12	0.342	0.119	0.761
Teachers' strategies in teaching verbal taboos	13	0.071	0.810	0.465
	14	0.460	0.613	0.212
	15	0.113	0.481	0.857
	16	0.056	0.456	0.486
	17	0.010	0.487	0.524
	18	0.045	0.969	0.615
Questions about teachers' position	19	0.091	0.023	0.816
	20	0.820	0.717	0.826
	21	0.199	0.148	0.218
	22	0.190	0.317	0.865

\* Significance level of Chi-Square, \*\*Significance level of Spearman correlation coefficient

### Discussion and conclusion

The current study dealt with the necessity of teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to non-Iranian Persian learners from the perspective of teachers teaching Persian to non-Persians. Moreover, the strategies used by the teachers when teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to learners in necessary cases as well as the teachers' positions (maintaining positions) when teaching these issues were also investigated. The obtained results of the current study can be categorized in two main groups. The first group includes the results of data analyses of the main questions of the research as follows:

- According to the teachers, learners' awareness of verbal and non-verbal taboos of the target language is meaningfully essential.
- Based on the teachers' opinions, teaching laborious terms and non-verbal taboos of the target language to learners is not essential.
- Teachers believe that the learner's age is not an obstacle for answering their questions about laborious terms and non-verbal taboos and their questions can be answered without taking their ages into account.

- Answering learners' questions about verbal and non-verbal taboos should not be affected by their gender and under any circumstances (mixed classes), answering their questions about these issues is necessary.

It is worth noting that gender, age and teaching experience of the teachers did not have any impact on these obtained results.

The second group contains the results of the analyses of the questions related to teacher strategies in teaching verbal and non-verbal taboos to learners when necessary and the teacher's position (maintaining his/her position) when teaching these issues which are summarized as follows:

- In order to avoid the repetition of laborious terms and learner behaviors including non-verbal taboos, providing direct explanation is necessary.

- Providing explanations about laborious terms should be done by the teacher, not any other person.

- Providing explanations about non-verbal taboos should be done by the teacher, not any other person. The results showed that as the teachers grew older, their tendency for asking others to provide explanations about learners' behaviors including non-verbal taboos became less. It was observed that mostly younger teachers tend to ask other to provide such explanations.

- In order to amend/correct learners' behaviors including non-verbal taboos, teachers made use of an intermediate language (English or Arabic).

- Learners' questions about laborious terms and the things they do not know about verbal taboos should be clarified and explained for them personally and in their own presence. Moreover, female teachers tend more to provide such explanations and clarifications personally.

- When learners ask questions about laborious terms or when they produce verbal taboos unconsciously, it is essential for the teachers to Ask them to refer to books, dictionaries, magazines, websites, etc

- Generally, teachers believe that they should not show their unawareness of laborious terms when learners ask about them. However, female teachers preferred to show that they are unaware when such questions are asked from them.

- According to the teachers, providing all the meanings and functions of the words whose explanations require entering the field of laborious terms should be taken into account, but female teachers do not tend to provide such information.

- Teachers paid specific attention to their positions and social status as an instructor when explaining laborious terms and non-verbal taboos to learners.

- Teachers were not worried about being accused of immorality and indecency by students when talking about a taboo subject in class.

- The older the teachers, the less their tendency was to ask students to refer to books, dictionaries, magazines, websites, ... to amend/correct their taboo behavior. On the other hand, younger teachers tended more to do so.

- Older teachers tended more to use an intermediate language (English or Arabic) to answer learners' questions about laborious terms.

As it is obvious from the results, teachers think that learners' awareness of verbal and non-verbal taboos is something necessary, while teaching these issues is not essential which shows that teachers are not reluctant to enter verbal and non-verbal taboo subjects in Persian language classes. This can be rooted in teachers' religious beliefs and lack of their familiarity with language and behavioral norms of student society.

It is also observed that female teachers, young teachers and those who had less teaching experiences avoided entering direct discussions about taboo subjects in their classes which can be

attributed to the modesty and shame of most Iranian women in entering discussions about such issues. Older teachers, on the other hand, had the needed experience to face such issues due to their experiences of teaching in different language classes and encountering learners from different countries.

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